

United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1005
28 October 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Secretary-General asks United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to lend her good offices in helping internally displaced persons affected by conflict in Yugoslavia.
- ◆ Secretary-General, in statement to mark Day Devoted to African Debt, calls for lasting solution to Africa's external indebtedness.
- ◆ Secretary-General proposes advance payments against future assessments by those Member States in a position to do so, as short-term solution to United Nations financial crisis.
- ◆ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to send high-level mission to city of Dubrovnik.
- ◆ United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia to begin deployment during first two weeks of November.
- ◆ Full integration of disabled, youth and elderly into society called for in Social Committee.
- ◆ Special Political Committee begins review of peace-keeping operations.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has asked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mrs. Sadako Ogata, to consider assisting the "needy" internally displaced persons affected by the conflict in Yugoslavia. He calls the growth in the number of displaced persons within Yugoslavia "the most serious humanitarian problem" caused by the fighting, aside from direct casualties and the destruction of housing and various infrastructural facilities.

In a report to the Security Council of 25 October, the Secretary-General said present indications were that the total number of internally displaced persons was approximately 300,000; according to the most recent estimates of

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the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), that number might increase to at least 400,000 by the end of this year. He said Mrs. Ogata had informed him that she was prepared to examine on an urgent basis how the UNHCR could be of assistance in Yugoslavia. The involvement of the High Commissioner might also have a welcome preventive impact and contribute to the creation of conditions that would ultimately enable the internally and externally displaced to return to their homes.

The Secretary-General further cited the serious economic consequences of the crisis in Yugoslavia, noting that even in the case of a cease-fire in the near future, the economic effects would remain for a long time to come. That aspect, he said, represented yet another imperative for a halt to the fighting and a negotiated settlement.

The Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, former United States Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, returned recently from a fact-finding mission to Yugoslavia. Mr. Vance reported among other things that the embargo imposed by the Security Council on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia was being violated.

The Security Council is scheduled to take up the Secretary-General's report this week.

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The Secretary-General called today for a lasting solution to Africa's external indebtedness and the creation of a "solid basis" for integrating all countries, developed as well as developing, into the global economy.

In a statement on the occasion of the Day Devoted to the African Debt, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said an open international trading system and adequate finance were essential to facilitate the structural changes required to improve the competitiveness of the African economies in the global market. He called on the international community to address the root causes of the global problems that threaten the collective security.

The day-long meeting was organized by the Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Issa Ben Yacine Diallo, and by the Reverend Leon Sullivan, Co-Chairman of the African/African-American Summit, in an effort to sensitise decision-makers around the world to the urgent need for debt relief in Africa.

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The Secretary-General has stated that "talk of a new era of cooperation and commitment to the goals of the Charter, will remain ill-founded as long as the ability of the Organization to fulfill its growing responsibilities was undermined by the current financial crisis".

In his report to the General Assembly on the financial situation of the United Nations dated 24 October, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar proposed advance

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payments against future assessments by those Member States which were in a position to do so, as a short-term solution to the problem. He also reminded the Assembly that permission to borrow commercially, which had been rejected by the body, had been approved for several United Nations specialized agencies.

The Secretary-General stressed that it was "incumbent" on the membership to provide a means to meet the tasks entrusted to the United Nations. He reiterated that unless "substantial contributions" were received shortly, the cash required to meet regular budget obligations and those of certain new peace-keeping operations would exceed the funds available from the peace-keeping accounts. Given those circumstances, the Secretary-General said, the Organization would become "insolvent and unable to meet its commitments". The United Nations is currently owed over \$1.3 billion by Member States.

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An advance party for a mission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to Yugoslavia left Paris today for the city of Dubrovnik. The Agency is preparing to send a high-level representative to Yugoslavia to consult on all questions relating to the protection of the country's cultural and natural heritage.

Speaking at the UNESCO General Conference on Friday, 25 October, the delegate of Yugoslavia told the plenary that he had just handed over a letter from the Yugoslav Prime Minister to UNESCO Director-General Mayor. The letter stated that Yugoslavia would accept the visit of the mission to Dubrovnik with "great pleasure". The delegate said Yugoslavia would give all necessary assistance to UNESCO's advance party and to the mission to the embattled city, which is inscribed on the World Heritage list.

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It was announced at Headquarters today that the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) has officially begun its operation.

The Security Council, on 16 October, authorized the establishment of an Advance Mission to assist the Cambodian parties in maintaining the cease-fire in preparation for a proposed United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The Advance Mission, which will be headquartered in Phnom Penh, is expected to reach full deployment by mid-December. It will be absorbed into the Transition Authority once the Security Council officially establishes the creation of UNTAC and the General Assembly approves its budget.

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The full integration of the disabled, the youth and the elderly into society, through education, training and equal opportunities, was called for today by several delegations to the General Assembly's Third Committee

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(Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), as it continued its discussion of social development issues.

The representative of Spain, Consuelo Valdes, reiterated the need to review the question of translating terminology now used to describe disabled persons in United Nations documents. These terms she said, include disability-related terms such as "impairment" and "handicapped," which could be considered pejorative or discriminatory. She said this matter should be dealt with by the end of the Decade.

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A call for the establishment of a working capital fund and a reserve stock of equipment for peace-keeping operations was made today before the General Assembly's Special Political Committee by the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, Marrack Golding.

As the Committee began its comprehensive review of "the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects", Mr. Golding asserted that peacekeeping was in an evolutionary phase in which new tasks had placed increasing demands on the Secretariat. Administrative and financial difficulties needed to be addressed if delays in deployment were to be avoided, he said. He also stressed that "something must be done to ensure that there is money in the kitty" to meet the start-up costs of a new operation.

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